



Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

3800 Division Street, Stone Park, IL 60165 | Phone 708-450-9050 | Fax 708-450-9065 | www.jccia.com | Email: jcc@jccia.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JCCIA Announces Election results for '21-'22

January 4, 2021

The Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans is proud to announce the unanimous election of Ron Onesti as its new President. Ron will lead the Italian American community in fostering Italian culture while addressing social issues that affect Italian Americans locally and across the country. "Proud, Positive and Unified" is his platform.

The JCCIA is the umbrella organization of almost fifty Italian American affiliate organizations in the Chicago area, and has produced Chicago's Columbus Day Parade since its inception in 1952.

"I consider it an honor as well as a responsibility," Onesti said. "There is much to be done to ensure the preservation of our culture and the traditions our parents and grandparents fostered here in America. This 'JCCI-A-Team' is committed to facing the challenge and getting it done!"

Onesti has made it clear that the unification of the community is of the utmost importance. "Our community is at a crossroads right now," Ron said. "This is an incredibly important time in our history. It will be the strength of our numbers that will allow us as a community to maintain our place in society garnering the respect we deserve when it comes to social, cultural, economic or any other issues affecting us," Onesti said.

Outgoing President Sergio Giangrande, who finished his two-year term, is excited about handing over the torch. "We are proud to have Ron Onesti and the new slate of officers take us into 2021. The Italian American community of Chicago has spoken, and they could not have made a better choice," he said. "With the environment being what it is, this team has the experience and the knowledge to lead during these challenging times."

"Now, more than ever, is the time for those who are concerned about the perpetuation of our Italian traditions to get involved and join this great organization," Onesti said. "Whether it is because of the love of the culture, social experiences or to honor those who came to this country with little more than the clothes on their backs in search of a better life for their families, the JCCIA is the group to be a part of. We have several levels of membership available at <https://www.jccia.com/join-us>"



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JCCIA Officers for the '20-'21 term will be:

President, Ron Onesti was born on Taylor Street in Chicago and has been with the JCCIA since 1981. He is a proven leader with ties to many Italian American organizations nationwide and locally, as the newly elected President of The National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, a Director of Casa Italia and a Director of the Italian American War Veterans Museum. His platform plan for the JCCIA is based on greater communication and building unity among the Italian American community. He writes a regular column in the Daily Herald newspaper and is a successful entrepreneur as owner of two iconic music theatres, The Arcada and Des Plaines Theatres, seven themed restaurants, a boutique hotel and a family amusement park. He has been awarded the Cavaliere honor from the Republic of Italy, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and many other community awards.

1st Vice President, Lisa Ryan will be serving her second term as 1st Vice President. Lisa is Chief of Staff to a City of Chicago Alderman. She is the niece of former JCCIA President, Anthony Bottalla.

2nd Vice President, Salvatore Camarda is CEO of MeetApp, a global technology company headquartered in Chicago and in Stockholm, Sweden. Salvatore's father, Joseph, has served as president of the Maria SS. Lauretana Society of Altavilla Milicia in Chicago for over 50 years. Salvatore is currently an officer of Maria SS. Lauretana.

3rd Vice President, Lyn "Linda" Scolaro has been an educator for 39 years teaching Italian at the high school level. She has represented high school teachers in various organizations locally, nationally, and internationally. She has also been awarded the Cavaliere honor from the Republic of Italy, and is a member of the IAET, and SADIA. Lyn is also currently the Ente Gestore of Italidea-Midwest.

Secretary, Stan Kuczynski is President of Chicago West Suburban Unico and a Retirement Planner at Hammer Retirement Services.

Treasurer, Christina Caliendo Cerami returns as JCCIA Treasurer. Her father, Joe De Serto, was one of the founding members of the organization in the early 1950s. Chris is the President of the Society of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, working diligently to attain the Shrine status and The Papal Inconoration of the Statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Melrose Park.

Sgt. At Arms, Frank Di Piero is the host of "Keepin' It Real with Frankie D.", an Italian American Podcast at ItalianAmericanLife.com and the home of "your" Italian American Moments. Frank is a Director at Casa Italia, Italidea Midwest, Harlem Avenue Little Italy Business Association and Little Italy Cenetta.



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Avanti Group President, Pasquale Gianni has been appointed to lead the JCCIA youth initiative. His maternal grandfather and mentor, the late Dominic DiFrisco, served as President Emeritus of the JCCIA. Most recently, in 2019, he stepped into his grandfather's shoes to serve as master of ceremonies for the JCCIA's coveted Dante Awards. An attorney by day, Pasquale proudly works in the labor movement for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. He is also a partner in his family's fourth generation office furniture manufacturing business, Gianni Inc. Ultimately, his vision is to create greater youth involvement and to foster ethnic pride and awareness amongst his contemporaries.

JCCIA Women's Division President, Rose Mary Ranallo is the chief financial officer and manager of her family businesses, NS Builders and Arno Decorating. Rose Mary is also past treasurer of the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, and has chaired the division's Italian Heritage Ball and Cotillion as well as its Scholarship Benefit and Fashion Show.

Executive Director, Jo Ann Serpico will continue her role as JCCIA Executive Director. Jo Ann is a past President of the JCCIA and is charged with attending to the day-to-day operations of the organization.